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SIPDIS

STATE FOR T (U/S JOSEPH), NP/RA (ODLUM) AND NEA/IPA (MAHER)
USDOE FOR NNSA ADMINISTRATOR AMB. LINTON BROOKS, NA-20,
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SUBJECT: NNSA ADMINISTRATOR BROOKS' DECEMBER 6-9 VISIT TO ISRAEL FOCUSES ON CURRENT AND FUTURE COOPERATION, IRAN

REF: A. TEL AVIV 6765
B. TEL AVIV 6751
C. STATE 216108

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Gene A. Cretz. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security/Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Linton Brooks visited Israel December 6-9 for a series of discussions of ongoing cooperation between NNSA and the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC). IAEC Director General Gideon Frank hosted the visit. In addition to a review of on-going cooperation in nonproliferation, the two sides discussed Iran, Advanced Fuel Cycles, recent changes in leadership of the Russian Federal Atomic Energy Agency, the new IAEA Committee on Safeguards and Verification, and general scientific cooperation. The visit included a courtesy call on Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. End Summary.

ONGOING COOPERATION REVIEW

¶2. (SBU) Brooks and Frank reviewed the status of U.S.-Israeli cooperation under the September 16, 2004, Letter of Intent (LOI) on Cooperation in the Fields of Nonproliferation, Arms Control, Regional Security, and Combating Terrorism. They covered the following:

¶A. Both sides agreed that in principle it would be desirable to convert the SOREQ Reactor to use low enriched uranium, although the exact legal mechanism remains unclear. Brooks and Frank agreed that the next step was a technical study to verify that conversion was feasible. Frank noted that there had been press interest on this in Israel and proposed the two sides agree on a common press line (for use only if asked) saying that the sides thought conversion was a good idea and were discussing it but that there were no immediate security concerns. Brooks agreed.

¶B. The Israelis proposed to expand Megaports cooperation beyond the Port of Haifa to the Port of Ashdod. Of greater urgency, however, the Israelis would like Second Line of Defense equipment installed at Ben Gurion Airport. Brooks said he would consider this last suggestion and respond as soon as possible.

¶C. The sides agreed on three next steps in their ongoing seismic cooperation: regional array procedures for data processing, using the Israel Seismic Network as an array, and computing travel time profiles and earth structure. Frank noted that Jordan "was on board" with this cooperation. Brooks promised to provide Frank with a new NNSA point of contact in this area.

¶D. Frank reviewed progress in Israel on improving export control, said the Israelis were looking forward to forthcoming Commodity Identification Training to be provided by NNSA, acknowledged that the United States was waiting for a proposed date, but did not provide such a date.

¶E. Responding to informal staff discussions, Frank proposed expanding the LOI to include technical exchanges on the new IAEA Committee on Safeguards and Verification and on Generation IV Reactors Proliferation Resistance. He offered to provide a draft document documenting such an expansion.

¶F. Frank noted that the recent emergency management discussion team headed by retired Rear Admiral Joe Krol had been among the most valuable interchanges the Israelis have had with the United States. He said he looked forward to additional steps, possibly to include modeling and a larger tabletop exercise. Brooks agreed on the value of the exchange.

IAEA COMMITTEE ON SAFEGUARDS AND VERIFICATION

¶3. (C) Frank recalled his suggestion from a previous meeting that the new IAEA Committee on Safeguards and Verification receive field reports directly and without editing. Brooks said that the United States would be willing to discuss this topic at the forthcoming U.S.- Israel nonproliferation discussions in Washington, but that there was reluctance to embrace the idea because (a) the committee would not be properly staffed to manage such reports and (b) discussion of these specifics was premature since the basic structure and procedures of the committee had yet to be determined. Frank noted that the real issue was finding a way to insure that the committee had access to unfiltered information. Frank feared that the IAEA staff would filter or otherwise distort field reports in order to preserve a particular IAEA policy position. Brooks agreed that such an outcome would be undesirable and should be prevented. Frank noted that his

suggestion on unfiltered access to field reports was only one approach. It would not be necessary for the committee actually to receive field reports in all cases. The knowledge that they could do so would reduce the chance of distortion -- whether deliberate or inadvertent -- on the part of the IAEA staff.

¶4. (SBU) In a subsequent meeting, Frank discussed the importance of having specific criteria for which states should be referred to the Committee on Safeguards and Verification and what additional requirements should be imposed on such states. Frank suggested that the special requirements should apply "until the IAEA Board of Governors determines otherwise." He provided a brief paper entitled "Additional Transparency and Safeguards Measures."

BEGIN TEXT OF PAPER:

After a state is found in breach of its commitments or in non-compliance (and as long as the Agency cannot conclude that there are no undeclared nuclear materials and activities), special requirements should apply: better detection capabilities (more comprehensive access to sites, people and documents with no advance notice, provision of additional information with shorter defined response time, more effective use of technological means -- on line remote sensing, etc.) and special reporting requirements (inspection field reports to the BOG (chairman plus...); full, immediate and factual reports to every BOG meeting (any denial of access, all unanswered questions) in addition to the comprehensive format used in September 2005; special BOG meeting in case of anomaly (Chair's call, not the secretariat)).

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END TEXT OF PAPER.

INDIA CIVIL NUCLEAR COOPERATION

¶5. (SBU) Frank noted that security conditions had heretofore limited Israel's interest in commercial nuclear power. If, as Frank hoped, the peace process prevailed, then within five to ten years it would clearly be in Israel's interest to move to develop commercial nuclear power in order to reduce dependence on energy imports. In view of this, Frank wondered whether it would be possible for the United States to structure the changes in legal regimes that would be needed for civil nuclear cooperation with India in a way that would subsequently allow them to apply to Israel. Brooks responded that it would be extremely unhelpful for Israel to pursue this issue at this time. The U.S. strategy is to carve out a specific exemption for India rather than create a new regime. The United States distinguishes India from Pakistan on the basis of nonproliferation performance and India from Israel on the basis of an immediate need for growth of civil nuclear power.

¶6. (SBU) In a subsequent separate conversation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General Ron Prosor raised the issue of providing criteria that could ultimately apply to Israel. Prosor assured Brooks that the Government of Israel understood the message previously conveyed by Under Secretary of State Joseph that now was not the time to raise the issue formally. Still, he hoped that the United States would consider specific criteria, especially in domestic legislation, which would make it easier to approve similar cooperation with Israel in the future.

¶7. (SBU) Frank returned to this subject a third time at a subsequent meeting at which he provided a paper entitled "Generic Eligibility Criteria for Peaceful Nuclear Technology Cooperation with the U.S.," containing what he characterized as personal suggestions of what appropriate criteria might be.

BEGIN TEXT OF ISRAELI PAPER:

General orientation. The country:

- a. Is a U.S. ally.
- b. Is generally willing to accommodate U.S. foreign policy interests.
- c. Has a stable democratic regime.
- d. Recognizes the existence of its neighbors, and does not threaten to destroy any other country.
- e. Has a credible energy requirement for nuclear generation of electricity, and for civilian nuclear applications such as radio-pharmaceutical.

Non-Proliferation. The country:

- a. Has a solid non-proliferation record (it is neither suspected nor was it caught in violation of its IAEA safeguards obligations), it does not constitute a proliferation risk and it could be a useful ally of the U.S. in the non-proliferation domain.
- b. Has advanced nuclear technology (it has both nuclear reactors and the scientific-technological infrastructure to support them), which it handles in a responsible and accountable manner.
- c. Is willing to apply full safeguards on all nuclear power plants for electricity production, as well as on the scientific-technological infrastructure that supports them.
- d. Is an adherent to the NSG and MTCR.
- e. Has an effective system of nuclear and dual-use export controls that includes an enforcement mechanism, including on the export of enrichment and reprocessing technologies, and is supporting international efforts to limit their spread.
- f. Is committed to a moratorium on nuclear testing.
- g. Implements physical security, as well as accountancy and control measures based on the highest international standards on any fissile material and sensitive nuclear facilities in its territory (including being a party to the CPPNM) and endorses relevant IAEA codes of conduct on the safety and security of research reactors and radioactive sources.

h. Has taken steps to implement UNSC resolution 1540.
i. Has endorsed the PSI.

END TEXT OF ISRAELI PAPER.

RUSSIAN DEVELOPMENTS

¶8. (C) Brooks and Frank exchanged impressions of the new head of the Russian Federal Atomic Energy Agency (Rosatom), Sergei Kiriyenko. Brooks noted that the Secretary of Energy had spoken to him and that Kiriyenko said the right things about nonproliferation cooperation. Nonetheless, both agreed that his appointment signaled a desire to focus on improving Rosatom's commercial business and that this could make it more difficult to gain cooperation on Iran, where Rosatom had been somewhat helpful in the past. Frank was particularly concerned by this because of the importance he attached to referring Iran to the UN Security Council and imposing sanctions as soon as possible. Frank said he had been directed by the Prime Minister to visit Russia as soon as possible. Brooks said he also hoped to visit Moscow shortly. They agreed to keep each other informed of any new insights.

ADVANCED FUEL CYCLES

¶9. (U) Brooks noted the growing U.S. belief that the global economy would require significant growth in commercial nuclear power. The waste disposal aspects of that growth might well require some form of reprocessing that did not entail separating plutonium but permitted greater extraction of energy content (probably in fast burner reactors) and significant reduction in waste requiring disposal. Frank agreed with the importance of this area and said the Israelis had discussed the topic with the French (no details were provided). He suggested that the United States consider packaging the approach differently. Instead of "reprocessing" we should speak of waste recycling and separation. Instead of advanced burners, we should speak of waste burners. Frank felt that this terminology would help defuse the (erroneous) implication that the expansion of nuclear power presented nonproliferation issues.

¶10. (U) While agreeing with Frank, IEAC Chief Scientist Dov Shvarts also noted that global expansion of nuclear power would require many reactors in non-fuel cycle states. He argued that these should be developed with lifetime cores (to minimize the need for refueling and thus for potential diversion of fuel) and that they should be fast reactors (so that if a state attempted to use them for weapons purposes the plutonium 239/plutonium 240 ration would be unfavorable).

VISA PROBLEMS FOR SCIENTISTS

¶11. (U) Shvarts provided Brooks with a copy of a June 20, 2005 letter to the U.S. Embassy expressing concerns over U.S. visa policy. He and Frank said that scientific cooperation was being significantly hampered by new U.S. practices. The greatest concerns were excessive delays in granting visas and a new U.S. policy of invalidating long-term visas if a short-term visa of another category was issued. Shvarts gave personal example. He holds a two-year "B" visa allowing for multiple trips to the United States for conferences. He is shortly to take a three-month sabbatical and has been invited to spend it at the University of Rochester. He has been advised, however, that a pre-condition for issuing him a three-month "J" visa would be the cancellation of his existing "B" visa. As a result, he anticipates that he will spend his sabbatical doing research within the European Union. He asserted that this problem (and result) was widespread. Brooks promised to pass on these concerns to the Department (copy of letter provided separately).

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

¶12. (U) Frank and Shvarts said they would be interested in discussions of how the Department of Energy self-regulates facilities, especially research reactors, and would like to exchange best practices in this area. They also expressed interest in technical exchange on wet fuel storage and corrosion issues. Finally, the Israelis asked for assistance with regard to access to Monte Carlo codes relevant to safeguards that are maintained by the Radiation Safety Information Computational Center at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Shvarts noted that they had access to earlier versions of the codes but that after 9/11 they had been denied access to updates. Brooks noted that all of these areas were the responsibility of other officials within the Department of Energy, but that he would see what could be done.

COURTESY CALL ON PM SHARON - ISRAELI VIEWS ON IRAN

¶13. (C) Accompanied by Frank, Brooks met for 25 minutes with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. The meeting was an Israeli initiative and was billed as a combination courtesy call and indication of the importance of the strategic relationship. After a brief discussion of the cooperation in nonproliferation that had brought Brooks to Israel, Sharon turned to Iran. He cited his long relationship with President Bush extending back to the President's days as Governor. He said throughout this period he had consistently told the President that he was willing to take risks for peace. He was not, however, willing to take risks with the

survival of the Jewish State. Iran posed a threat to that survival. It was imperative that Iran be dealt with. The Prime Minister did not believe that Israel needed to be the "sharp end of the spear" in dealing with Iran, but the problem could not be allowed to continue. It was imperative that Iran be referred to the Security Council and that sanctions be imposed. Sharon noted that he had tasked Frank with preparing a recommended list of sanctions that would have maximum effect on the Iranian weapons program and that Frank was in the process of doing so. (Comment: Frank had not mentioned this fact to Brooks previously despite some earlier discussion between them on Iran and the importance of sanctions.) Sharon did not mention military options, but repeatedly characterized the existing situation as unacceptable and stressed his unwillingness to take risks with the survival of Israel.

¶14. (SBU) Frank made similar points to Brooks in earlier discussions. In discussing the general political situation Frank agreed that a secular Iranian government was equally likely to pursue nuclear weapons but still felt a secular government would be preferable because it would be more susceptible to pressure from the application of sanctions. Frank expressed frustration with the failure of the IAEA process to lead to a referral to the Security Council. He noted that while there were no technical problems with the recent EU3/Russian proposal to allow uranium conversion in Iran for enrichment in Russia, the effort was a perfect example of Iran's thus-far-successful salami slice approach to the negotiations.

NON-SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS

¶15. (U) In addition to the substantive discussions noted above, Under Secretary Brooks signed a memorandum of understanding on Megaports with the Israel Ministry of Transport, laid a wreath commemorating Holocaust Victims at Yad Vashem, delivered a closed lecture at the Jaffee Center at Tel Aviv University (interagency cleared text available on both the Jaffee and NNSA web sites), visited the SOREQ Nuclear Research Center for a series of briefings, primarily focused on laser research, and embarked for four hours on the Israeli submarine INS Dolphin, where he observed various training exercises. The submarine ride, where Brooks was accompanied by his Executive Staff Director, a Navy Submarine Captain, was suggested by the Israelis based on Brooks' past career as a U.S. submarine officer. Impressions of Dolphin and her crew have been provided separately to the U.S. Naval Attaché.

¶16. (U) Under Secretary Brooks has cleared this cable.

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